cashew nuts, etc. While the edible oils and pulses were imported for processing and re-export. Increased domestic production of these commodities could reduce the need to import these commodities.

Adverse effect of cheap timber imports

3360. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of the COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of small scale manufacturing units in the rural areas in Punjab based on timber have been closed down due to cheaper imports of raw materials as well as finished goods resulting in slump in consumption level of farm forestry products;

(b) whether Government have received any requests from Punjab to help the State in the establishment of wood based paper mills/pulp/board industries there and North-Western region of the country to boost farm forestry and help the poverty ridden families of the State; and

(c) the action taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The Government of India has forwarded the request of the State Government to Paper Industry Associations & Trade Bodies to consider it while deciding the location of their new plants.

Decline in Export of Pepper and Cashew

3361. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will Minister of the COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the export of value added pepper such as crushed and ground pepper to United States fell considerably in the beginning of the year and the export of cashew slipped to 7 per cent in 2005-06; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the details of steps taken to rectify the above?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) No, Sir. The export of value